

BANNER



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LITERARY.

From the American Flag. NATURE'S LESSONS.

BY MRS. R. P. THORNDIKE.

Summer in the lap of Autumn
Pours her rich and golden store;
Bursting buds proclaim the Spring-time
When the Winter storm is o'er.
So upon Life's tollsome journey,
Like the circling round of years,
We may trace the deep emotions
Moving us to smiles and tears.

Yet again might Spring-time gladden,
Did we keep the fountain clear,
And with high resolves determine
Only by the right to steer.
Moving thoughtfully, serenely,
Like the onward march of Time,
Noble deeds may be accomplished,
And a destiny sublime.

Grandly Nature tells her story,
As the seasons glide along,
Full of symbols, hints, and warnings,
That to every age belong.
Here's a quaint and ponderous volume;
Every page is lettered o'er;
Such as this need no revising—
Earnestly its truth explore.

Reap the harvest of the future:
Rich experience will be there,
If within Life's early Spring-time
Thou hast sown the seeds with care.
Golden sheaves of thought and feeling
Well adorn the Autumn years;
Noble acts, and deeds of mercy,
When the wintry gloom appears.

Note the emblems of the morning,
Scan the lessons of the day;
When the twilight hour is dawning,
Thoughtfully review the way.
Let the night's deep inspiration
Eloquent with heavenly light,
Nerve thee. Guard thy every action—
Keep thy spirit's armor bright!

[Written for the Banner of Progress.]

THE FATHER'S LEGACY.

BY FANNY GREEN M'DUGAL.

At a certain period of past time, the precise date of which is unimportant, in a small country cottage about fifty miles from a large city, a young girl sat alone in the chamber of the Dead. She was tender-looking, and fair withal; but her features had a care-worn look, as if suffering had, in some degree, anticipated the work of time; and though one might judge from the circumstances around her that she had before known something of privation, yet now she was bowed down by the weight of that first great sorrow, which often overwhelms the young and untried with such an infinite sense of suffering, as no after trouble, though tenfold greater in actual degree, ever could surpass.

There were light steps flitting to and fro; and there were hushed voices, as one and another came in, as is the custom in country places, to look at the still form of one who had so lately moved among them, sympathizing with all the interests of neighbor and friend. But the young girl scarcely heeded them, as still she sat there, hour after hour, on the same low seat, with her head bowed down on the couch, and the cold hand, which she had withdrawn from the place where it was laid for its long repose, still resting under her cheek, which was almost as pale and cold as itself.

It was in vain that the kind friends, who had come in to assist in preparations for the funeral, attempted to remove her from the room. She would sometimes go a little while to nestle and weep on the bosom of her sick mother; but when thus relieved, she would quickly return to gaze on the wan face. The white drapery of the bed, the white curtains and walls, had a solemn meaning in their whiteness, looking so pale and deathly; she could scarce believe them the same that had witnessed so many happy hours. She could not weep. And was this all that remained of her dear father—the kindest, the tenderest, the best? She had never been separated from him in all her life for a single week; and now he had left her forever. "Can it be possible?" she repeatedly asked herself; "can it be?"

It was but a few weeks since he had walked about with her, quietly leaning on her arm, as he had been wont to do since the long drooping days of the passing summer fled so rapidly, every one leaving less of his remaining strength. It was but a few days since he had been actually confined within doors. It was but a few hours since he had spoken to her, gently and kindly, with a quick, life-interest in every word. It was, apparently, but a few moments since he had bestowed his last blessing. And now all these things, and a thousand others, which had made life so beautiful, were matters of history alone. They would have no more existence for her, except in the memories that would never die. But she did not comprehend this. She was stunned by the force of the unexpected blow; her whole consciousness—all power of knowledge, feeling, thought, were concentrated in this one single point, of utter and unspeakable anguish. And without a word of complaint—without a single tear, to assuage or break into the torpor of her grief—she sat with almost unmovable eyes, while her heart seemed to swell and harden until, at length, the terrible tension pained and almost choked her. Her own small and tender hands, folded one over the other, were pressed hard on the cold and rigid hand beneath, and she gazed into the face she had uncovered, until it seemed as if all the sorrows and suf-

ferings of the world were centered, and bound up, in that single sense of death.

How could she realize that she was poor—that she had no earthly dependence, for herself and an almost helpless mother, but in those two small hands? She knew almost nothing of the world. The stories of its wants, its struggles, its necessities, its crimes, and its cruelty, which she at times heard, came to her like dreams—phantasms of sickly and morbid minds; but as realities, never. How could her child-heart, whose life of sixteen summers had been nurtured only amid the most tender and loving ministries, comprehend conditions which were as foreign to her experience as if they had belonged wholly to another race? An only child, and so tender and dutiful, she could not be otherwise than loved at home, with a tenderness and devotion almost bordering on idolatry; and as for others, the kind and simple people with whom she chiefly mingled, how could she do otherwise than love? For she was a spirit of love, giving and receiving her sweet treasures of the heart without stint and without measure. The most ill-natured had never a hard word for her; and the most malicious were softened and warmed into good feeling at her presence. Living, as she did, so much in direct sympathy with the better phases of human life and character, and so little cognizant of anything like the reverse, the world, with its nicely-set snares, its honeyed treacheries, its heartless indifference and relentless cruelty, had for her but a sad experience. She seemed, as yet, all gentleness and tenderness, and had never learned to set aside the unquestioning trust of the child for the more stable and truthful self-reliance of a mature mind. And now she was bowed down by a passionate and unreasoning grief, that could not think; for it could only feel, through every lacerated fiber, one supreme sorrow. Had she a latent force of character, that would be equal to this extremity, and, looking out hence, equal to all the needs of life? It was a fearful question, and one which she, in her complete unconsciousness, never asked herself; though her poor, sick mother, now stricken by a double blow—the loss of her husband and the terrible grief of her daughter—pondered over night and day.

But as the last solemn rites approached, a fine sense of propriety and pride came to her rescue. The very sacredness of her sorrow, as well as the dignity of her character, forbade any great display in the presence of strangers, or indifferent persons—if there were, indeed, any indifferent, where all so truly seemed to sympathize and mourn with the mourners. She saw that she must put some constraint on herself, if only for the occasion; and the effort evinced a will-power which surprised her mother and astonished herself. All the mournful duties of the day were attended to, strictly and decorously; and only twice did she really break down through all these last, sad, solemn scenes.

The funeral was over, and nearly a week had gone by; yet still there seemed to be strange echoes about the house, as if responding when they spoke; and when they relapsed into silence, the unnatural stillness of the grave overhung the place.

The room where the young girl now sat, had an air of what may be called comfortable poverty. There was nothing that indicated absolute want, but much that told of privation, if we regard many of the modern contrivances for comfort and adornment as absolute necessities; and yet there were some dainty little touches of taste and fancy, intermingled with the common and the coarse, which not only indicated better days, but also a superior order of mind or culture, which had not yet lost sight of all the graces and amenities of life. The floor had only a square piece of carpeting, that lay before the fire, extending into the middle of the room; but it was very clean and white around the borders. The frames of the old-fashioned birch chairs were nicely waxed, and had evidently been kept with much care. There was a guitar in one corner of the room, and an antiquated harp in another. The sofa was covered with a rich but somewhat faded chintz; and the fire-screen, which was well preserved, looked as if it had been an heirloom in the family for many generations. There were a few book-shelves, well filled with books, most of them quite old, and a nice little buffet over the fire-place, with some very small China cups and saucers, a silver can and cream-pitcher of very antique forms; and in the latter were just six silver teaspoons. The room was cheerful and sunny, the one large bay window being unencumbered with any useless drapery.

And there sat our heroine, Amy Bishop, on a low stool, at the feet of her mother, the widow of one week, who, though broken down by disease and suffering, was yet in the full power and prime of life. She had long seen that such a day as this, sooner or later, must come; and she was not wholly unprepared. With a fond, but perhaps unwise tenderness, she had concealed her fears from Amy, who was still allowed to cheat herself with the fond hope of her father's ultimate recovery; nor did she believe, until that very last moment, that it was even possible to lose him. Mrs. Bishop, as many others do, perceived her error when it was almost too late to retrieve. It is never quite too late for any good purpose, because the purpose

itself is good; and no smallest portion of what is right and true ever was, or ever can be, lost.

They, the mother and daughter, sat for some time in perfect silence, if we except the smothered sighs, that every now and then stole away from the now compressed lips of Amy; for they instinctively felt that the time had come for a hard duty to be done; though only one of them had the most remote idea of what it might be.

Mrs. Bishop was the first to break silence. "Amy," said she, "listen to me; for I am now going to tell you something that will surprise, and may alarm you."

"What is it, mother?" returned Amy, lifting her head quickly, with a look and motion that indicated awakening interest in the affairs of life; for since the funeral she had been almost apathetic, scarcely noticing either things or persons about her.

"Would you be frightened," resumed Mrs. Bishop, eyeing her steadily, to see how the tidings might affect her, "if I should tell you that I have seen your father?"

"I thought you considered all those things idle and silly fancies, that can only be accepted by vulgar minds. At least, I know almost everybody else does."

"You take rather too much for granted, my child. I have long entertained the belief that departed spirits can and do return, and frequently revisit the scenes and the friends they have left behind; and my opinion is based on some substantial facts in my own experience, and confirmed by reliable and authentic history, both ancient and modern."

"O, if you believed these things, why didn't you tell me? And did my father believe them?" almost shrieked the girl, as her chalky paleness became suddenly suffused with a sharp and burning tinge of red, that indicated the force of the rallying power. "But when, where, how did you see him? Tell me! Tell me quick! Tell me all, mother!" She had risen from her seat, and stood before Mrs. Bishop, with her two hands pressed together and drawn hard to the heart, the head bending forward, the lips apart, and the whole action and expression so intense, as to show that for her a question of life or death was now pending.

"To answer your last question first, my child," resumed Mrs. Bishop, "it was last night that I was blest beyond any former moment of my life. It must have been very late, though I was still sitting by the bedside, where I had been for some hours watching your profound sleep with great anxiety; for the torpor of the last few days had alarmed me more than the first violent outbreak of your sorrow. At length I became uncertain whether to wake you or not; for your sleep was so deep it frightened me. Suddenly I felt the hand, that was already raised to touch you, drawn back by some unknown force; and at the same time, a voice, that was perfectly familiar, said, seemingly close to my ear, 'Let her sleep; it is good for her.'"

"I was prepared to see him, before I looked round; and so I did. He was standing a little way off, regarding me with a look of tenderest concern."

"Yes; you were right, Mary," he returned, after a little pause—and here, dear, you have the answer to your second question; for your father had some doubts in regard to this matter, and we promised each other, that whichever went first should, if possible, come back and inform the other of this and other truths we were desiring to know."

"I forgot for a moment that he had left us. I thought he had been gone, and come back, and sought to clasp him in my arms, when, strange to say, the form disappeared. But in a few moments it reappeared, with greater distinctness and in a more beautiful light."

"Do not seek to approach me," he said, waving a hand gracefully, as he used to do, keeping time whenever we played or sang; for you know he had a wonderfully fine ear."

"O, that makes me think of something," interrupted Amy. "Last Monday afternoon, while you were out in the garden, I was sitting here alone, and thought I would try to play a little. I took up the guitar and played two or three airs, for practice for my music lesson the next day. Almost as soon as I began, I heard a step, as of some person pacing up and down the room, and slapping the hands together gently, just as he used to when I played, and just as he did only four days before he left us. When I stopped, and looked around, I could see nothing; but, as soon as I began again, the sounds were renewed. I made myself perfectly certain that I heard this; and then I began to be so frightened I dared not stay another minute; but if I had been certain that it was really my father, I should not have been afraid at all. I ran out to the garden to you; but I dared not tell you, for I thought you would say I had grown nervous, and be fretting more about me. But I interrupt you, mother. Pray, do go on. I am thirsting for tidings of the Better Land; since my father went there, it is more than Heaven to me."

"I have no doubt," answered Mrs. Bishop, "that what you heard was a genuine spiritual manifesta-

tion. There are a number of things that confirm this, of which we will speak at another time.

"What shall I do for our child?" I asked, interrupting him; for that thought had long lain hard and heavy on my heart."

"Dear, dear mother!" sobbed Amy, "how could I so forget, even for one moment, that I still have you to love me?"

"You did not forget it, dear," returned Mrs. Bishop. "You simply did not think of it at the right time. But listen to his reply: 'She is already better,' he said, 'and will give you no further anxiety. This sleep is the best of medicine. I have magnetized her.'"

"I wonder if it was his hand that touched my forehead, and then pressed so gently on my stomach? I could not be frightened; though I almost knew it was a real hand. O, could it—can it be?" exclaimed Amy, with a look of rapturous belief stealing in upon her doubts.

"I do not know, my love," returned Mrs. Bishop; "but he will tell us, some time, and teach us more of ourselves, and more of this wonderful Soul-Life, of which we are, as yet, almost as ignorant as babes."

"Do you think he will really come to us again, and speak to us? Dear, dearest father!" exclaimed the girl, stretching her hands toward Heaven, with an invoking gesture. "But I interrupt again. What did he next say? Tell me—tell me all."

"This crisis"—and he looked at me so earnestly that I felt my eyes fall beneath his—terrible as it seems, is rich in blessings, both for you and Amy. You do not know that child; neither did I, before I saw her from the higher plane. She has great capabilities, fine and nobler powers; and when she once awakes to a true sense of her responsibilities, and the right philosophy of life, she will be a strong, true, and self-dependent woman."

"Did he really speak so of me, mother? Then I know it is true, and I will," said Amy, with an expression of mixed faith, doubt, and resolution.

"He really did, my child," returned Mrs. Bishop, kissing her flushed cheek; "and, what is better, you have in my estimation confirmed this opinion more, in the last few hours, than in your whole previous life. I now see something of what you may, and I believe, will be."

"But to return: Again I forgot myself, and was reaching out to clasp him, when the form faded away, I knew not when or how. The face went last, and last of all the smile, that seemed to illuminate for a little while the darkness that absorbed it. And then I first saw that the room was quite dark, the taper which I had lighted to look at you having gone out; and I knew that the light that seemed so living and natural, showing everything in the whole room, like daylight, had emanated from the form it had helped to clothe."

"O, mother!" said Amy, "if I had only known this before! You think it was real!" she parenthetically.

"No experience ever was, if this was not," replied Mrs. Bishop. "I was neither alarmed nor nervous, and was perfectly awake."

"O, if I only could have known it before!" repeated Amy; "I should have been saved much suffering. But perhaps it was necessary for me; and I have borne it," she added, after a momentary pause, pressing a hand hard against her heart.

"But, mother, you will not wonder how awful it was, when I tell you I thought perhaps I should never know or find my dear father any more. Sometimes it seemed as if I should never be good enough to go where he is. Then I thought if I do, we may both be so much changed, that we cannot recognize each other; and that would be all the same as losing him forever."

There was something so softening and tender in the pathos of this thought, that it broke the spell; the rigid bands of iron that had bound the breast, the stony hardness and heaviness of the heart, as if by a magic touch, dissolved at once. And O, how she wept, in torrents of healing, healthful, happy tears!

Mrs. Bishop did not attempt to restrain the benign outflow; for she well knew it was better than all medicine.

With every new burst of tears, Amy would sob out, "My father lives! I shall find and know him!" And this showed what a terrible hold of her the doubts had taken. At length the storm subsided; and in the new light of divine faith, the bow of heavenly hope was painted on her tears. She was no longer a mourner, but the heir-expectant of unknown and unimagined blessings.

The mother and daughter, with hand in-clasping hand, sat for some time silently together; for words would only mar the precious inflow of thought and feeling, which invested them with the blessedness of a new and more radiant sphere.

After a while, as the evening wore late, Mrs. Bishop said, "It is important, my love, that we should attend to some business matters. I have been for some days deferring it, hoping you would be better; and now, dear, you are so tired and excited, I hardly dare trust myself with what I have to say."

"What is it, mother?" returned Amy, springing to her feet, with a frightened and almost frantic look. "I know there is something, for I have seen and felt it all along; but what is it?"

"Do you think you can try and control your self now, dear, and begin to be a woman?"

Amy felt that there was something of just reproof in this; though it was intended rather to rouse her latent pride and thus strengthen her.

"O, mother! you must tell me; tell me quick, for I cannot wait!" urged the girl, with a look and voice of terrific apprehension. Then, perceiving how her impatience pained her mother, she added, "But what shall we do? What can we do?"

"Do try to be quiet, my child," said Mrs. Bishop, wiping her own tears away, "and then I will tell you. I have settled it all in my own mind."

"What is it, then?" returned Amy, with awakening animation; for her sanguine temperament was roused with the hope that there must be something better coming. The mother's voice, which was clear and hopeful, expressed it; and her own hope was suddenly excited.

Unwilling to dampen her child's rising expectations, Mrs. Bishop said gently: "There are no fairies, in these days, to bring us miraculous gifts, and put miraculous powers in our hands. We have only to struggle and work for ourselves; so do not expect too much, my child."

The countenance of the listener suddenly fell; but, as if not perceiving it, Mrs. Bishop went on, quietly: "You know I can cut and make dresses very well; and both of us are nice sewers. I have been told—indeed, Mrs. Taft says—that a good dress-maker is a rare thing in the city. They often fit very well, but their sewing is miserable."

"Well, mother," almost gasped the girl. "Why, I think of going to the city, and trying to make my powers available. I have felt better ever since I thought of this. You can work about, and help me some with the sewing, and at the same time go on with your studies. By-and-by you will get a teacher's place."

"And is that all?" replied Amy, in a low, hollow voice, and with a strange expression, as if she were trying to get sight of something that presented itself very dimly.

"For the present, Amy, I can think of nothing better; and all our friends are of the same opinion."

"But why must we go away at all? Why not stay here, in this beautiful village, and nice little cottage, where we have always been so happy?"

"Ah, my poor child! you hardly comprehend the worst yet. This house can no longer be our home. All our claim to its use depended on the life of your father; and this beautiful village has no bread for us, simply because it has no way by which we can earn it."

"No home! no bread!" repeated the girl, with a slow, deliberate emphasis, as if she pondered on the meaning of abstruse or unintelligible terms. "I cannot understand it, mother—indeed I cannot!" and she burst into a fit of hysterical weeping.

Mrs. Bishop waited quietly for the passion of tears to subside, and then she said: "As neither of us would like to be dependent, even if we had any friend to depend upon, it becomes necessary that we should find some reliable business, and that immediately. You know, dear, that I must depend much on you for strength and aid in carrying out these plans; so you must be strong as possible, in order to help me. You understand this, my child."

"O, yes, mother! but it is hard!" and Amy crouched down still lower at her mother's feet.

"But you have reason, Amy. You can see that we both of us have duties to the living, as well as the dead. Now that we only are left, of all our family, we must try more and more to help, and sustain, and bless each other."

"I will try—I do try!" said Amy, passionately clasping her hands. "Only tell me what I shall do, and I will try and do it. I will try with all my might!"

"In the first place, then, see if you cannot be quiet. Remember, that terrible as death is, it is not always the worst thing that can happen. Your father had suffered much for many years. He died in peace with all the world, and with a deep, earnest faith in the Better Life, which he has so long been visibly approaching. We have every reason to think that he is happy—far happier than he could be here. In fact, I know; for I have seen it."

"And I, too, know it," returned Amy, smiling through her tears; "for I have heard the good tidings, and I believe."

Mrs. Bishop drew the beautiful weeper to her arms, and parting away the fair curls that had fallen over her forehead, kissed her tenderly.

"How can you be so calm now, mother? You never used to be; and now, when father is gone, and we shall never see him again—never in the world!" said Amy, once more giving way; and, throwing herself on her knees, she hid her face in her mother's garments, weeping passionately.

"But, Amy," replied Mrs. Bishop, with the slightest possible reproof in her voice, "do you not feel—don't you know, that we shall all meet together again, in that Better Land, where he has only gone before us? And does it not seem selfish, as well as unwise, to make ourselves so unhappy, by forgetting how much better off he is?—that all his sufferings are ended, and he is now entering on the divine life of Heaven, for which his painful

and laborious though beautiful life had so well prepared him."

"O, mother, I have tried to think of that! I have done my best; but even with all you have told me—and I believe it—there will be times when I can only know that he is gone, only feel that I have lost him!"

At this moment, the dim twilight of the room was suffused with a soft, silvery light, and a benign presence, from whence a luminous cloud flowed off in graceful folds, stood a little way before them. Amy did not scream or faint away, as her mother had feared she might; nor did she attempt to approach the form, which, by every lineament and every look, she knew was her father—now looking even more fatherly than ever before; for there was a sweet angel pity in his smile, for the dear child that loved him, and was loved so very tenderly.

"Behold me, my daughter!" he said, at length. "I am here with you, a real and living presence. You will never doubt this again. And now be still, and be comforted; for I have come—as I still shall often come—to cheer and bless you."

"Earthly fathers give earthly treasures, and seek to enrich their children in material things. I have better gifts. To you, my child, I give Strength that shall make the hardest work a joy. I give Faith that shall lean on the surest anchor—the immovable power of demonstrated Truth. I give Hope that shall span the clouds of Earth with the beauty and glory of Heaven. I give a True Work, with the will to do, and the power to achieve it. I give an Interior Reliance which can never be divested of its Selfhood, and consequently can do itself no wrong."

"I write this legacy, my daughter, on the inmost tablet of your heart; and all that it indicates you will know, and do, and be. Fear not, my daughter, and shrink not; for the divine beauty of a true and useful work shall adorn you as with a crown of gold."

This uttered, the form seemed wrapped in a golden scroll more brilliant than the mid-day sun; and out from the midst came a low, sweet voice, which Mrs. Bishop recognized as that of her long lost mother, chanting forth these words, as if in benediction:

"The robes of the Righteous are white as snow. The life of the Righteous is an ever-flowing fountain of joy. The home of the Righteous is in the bosom of God!"

Then the sounds and the light retired together, and all was dark and still.

A deep peace fell upon the mourners; for the dark valley was lighted, and the black gulf was bridged. There was no more death!

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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Bible Revision.

The discussion at Calvary Church last week has demonstrated one fact to the satisfaction of all unbiased observers—that there can be no peace between the many different and differing sects, until the dogma of the plenary inspiration and Divine authenticity of the Scriptures is given up by them all as untenable and indefensible. Rev. Mr. Buckbee may continue to prove that there are a thousand errors in the King James version, and the Rev. Mr. Buel may just as easily demonstrate that that version is the best that could be made; but until it be acknowledged by the entire sectarian world that the Bible—even in the original languages, and even if it could be read in those languages by the whole people—is not an infallible rule of faith and practice, there will continue to be strife and contention in religious matters to all eternity. For, no sect will ever consent to give up its interpretation of the various passages upon which its creed is based; neither will skeptics surrender the right of private judgment, which leads them to deny the infallibility of the Scriptures, and to look upon them as wholly the work of man, to be submitted to the tribunal of Reason, as all other works of men are.

We see in the Revised New Testament, and the proposed revision of the Old, more apples of discord for the disturbance of the elements of sectarianism. The recent talk of "Christian union," or which we have read so much in the sectarian organs, is like the declaration of peaceful intentions on the part of European despots, immediately preceding a sudden outbreak of war. It is only a lullaby song, to be succeeded by a violent awakening to the fact that peace does not yet hold universal sway, and that the millennium has not yet come. "Christian union," by which is meant a permanent union of the so-called Christian sects, is as distant as ever. This new element of disunion, in the form of a modification of the "holy" and "infallible" Scriptures ostensibly to meet the progressive demands of the age, will be found more potent to continue the present sectarian state of the Church than even the old version, with its "thousand errors." As we have said quite recently, there can be no basis of union found in more belief or opinion. It is of no consequence how near to each other the sects may approach in their formulas of faith; so long as each has a creed of its own, which it requires the others to subscribe to, before considering them as entitled either to fellowship or to a seat in the "kingdom of heaven," there will be no peace among them, and union will be impossible.

Besides all this, the admissions of fallibility and error, as existing in the Bible, which the disputants in the recent discussion have been compelled to make, in order that each might make his side of the debate appear the best and strongest, only and can only tend to confirm the skeptical in their

skepticism. They have furnished us with weapons of their own manufacture, with which we can beat out the brains of the arguments of both sides. If one error can be found in any version of the Bible, or in the original, its infallibility is at once destroyed. If one false statement in science, one misrepresentation of a fact in history, can be proved against it, the reliability of the whole is thrown into doubt and discredit. Now, we maintain that the enlightened scientists and historians of modern days have discovered such historical and scientific discrepancies—to call them by no worse name. If the statement that the sun and moon stood still and shone upon the Israelites and their enemies a whole day, the moon visible at the same time with the sun, be translated correctly from the original, it is certainly an evident falsehood. And so with the account of the creation. The rejection of these statements necessitates the non-acceptance of others equally absurd and impossible; and thus the process of disintegration of the whole fabric of infallibility goes on, until there is nothing left of the "holy" Scriptures for sects to quarrel about.

With regard to the merits of the late discussion as a polemical performance, it is a matter of indifference to us which of the rival disputants carried off the palm. Either of them is sufficiently learned to talk well; but neither can assure his hearers of the positive truth of a single statement made in the Old or New Testament history, that has not already commended itself to their understandings as true. Truth is a matter of conviction, not of opinion—of positive knowledge, not of faith. What is true is known to be so, before it can be accepted for belief; or, in other words, we can only believe what we know to be true. This was the doctrine of Jesus himself, if the record of the apostle John be received as testimony of the fact. "The Spirit of Truth the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him." (John xiv. 17.) When we see the truth we must accept it; we cannot reject it if we would; for if we make the attempt, we stultify ourselves in our own estimation, which is an outrage upon self-love, and cannot be borne. That which we see or perceive to be truth, we know; and positive knowledge has no need of faith. Consequently, all the external religion of the sects, founded on faith, is of no value, because it has faith only for a foundation. Let the sectarians attempt a union upon the basis of positive knowledge, and they will meet with no difficulty or obstacle whatever. Belief never can be such basis, because it will always vary in different minds. Variety of opinion in matters of faith is as natural as differing complexions or varying temperaments. We must differ in regard to points not positively and decisively known to any of us; and, in respect of what is unknown to all, one knows as much as another. The translators and revisionists of the Bible, and the preachers from it, know no more of the realities written about in its pages, than the humblest uneducated man, or the most ignorant child. They can speak of what the Scriptures are written of, and so may all who run and read. But they cannot speak a fact into existence which is not a fact, nor one that never will be. Black cannot be made white, nor white black. When, therefore, they assert the reality of such a written or printed statement as the shining of the sun and moon, near each other, at the same time, and for an extra period of time—an event altogether out of the natural order—it is evidently an effort to make that pass for truth which is false. The same effort will continue to be made by the same class, so long as dupes are sufficiently numerous and credulous to make it a paying occupation. The guild of the clergy will not give up their means of living so long as they can utter the startling cry of "Infallibility!" with effect upon timid and unthinking minds, fearful of the future. But let the innocent lambs of their flocks once get an idea into their heads that they have been imposed upon—that the Bible is not an infallible book after all—that many of its statements are contrary to Nature and human Reason—that it is only the work of human hands and human intellects, and full of the errors and frailties of humanity—that they are paying at a very high figure for that which will profit them nothing—and then will the clerical occupation be indeed gone, and many a wolf in sheep's clothing be sent into the wilderness to gain his livelihood as he best can. And all good, honest, right-thinking, industrious men will say amen to his fate.

The National Convention.

A correspondent in San Jose, A. C. Stowe, writes on behalf of the members of the State Central Committee resident in Santa Clara county, that they are willing to contribute one-third of the expense of employing a delegate in the Cleveland Convention from this coast, provided the State Central Committee will appoint one. In case a suitable person cannot be found, already on the Atlantic side, who has been a resident of this State, he suggests that Hon. S. S. Jones, of Chicago, be appointed to act for the Spiritualists of California in the Convention. Our correspondent is in error, however, in regard to the power of the State Central Committee to appoint said delegate or delegates. Neither did we suggest that the Committee should do so.

The call for the National Convention provides for two representatives from "each local organization of Spiritualists or Progressing Reformers." Consequently, it is proper for the Friends of Progress in this city, and other organizations of Spiritualists in the State, to be represented each for itself in the Convention. The State Central Committee have no power in the premises. We hope the delegates will be appointed in time for the Convention.

To CONTRIBUTORS.—The lines sent to us from Portland, Oregon headed "My Religion," by "Sue," and those from Belpass, in the same State, entitled, "My Guardian Mother," do not possess sufficient literary merit to warrant their publication in the "Poet's Corner." Our correspondents, we know, have so much good-will toward us, that they will not be offended at the judgment we are compelled to pass upon their productions.

THE *Dramatic Chronicle* thinks it has a "mission"—that it is a useful one, and that it is gradually accomplishing it. Well, we think so too. Its mission is to prove how long a time an indifferent intellect, boasting of a "thorough education," can succeed in drawing encomiums upon its performances which the real merits of the latter do not deserve. This "mission" is very nearly accomplished.

"Jottings."

A San Francisco correspondent of the *Napa Register*, in recounting the case of a poor monomaniac recently arraigned in one of our Courts for a heinous offence, "jots" down his opinion of healing by the laying on of hands, as practiced by healing mediums. He claims to know that the practice is borrowed from heathen mythology and tradition, and quotes from a certain author an account of the practices of the priests in the temples of Isis and Serapis in Egypt. One of these examples is that of the Emperor Vespasian, who is said to have laid his hands, moistened with his spittle, upon the eyes of a blind man, and restored his sight. Another patient was lame in one hand, and the Emperor healed him with his foot. These cures were performed by direction of the oracle and priests of the temple of Serapis, at Alexandria. Admitting, for the sake of the argument, that those cures were actually performed, and that the modern spiritual healing mediums have borrowed from those ancient Egyptian priests of Isis and Serapis the present method of healing by the laying on of hands, what has the smart author of "Jottings from San Francisco," in the *Register*, to say of similar cures by the same means, said to have been performed by Jesus of Nazareth? In Mark, chapter vii. verses 32-35, it is recorded that a man who was both blind and deaf was brought to Jesus: "And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers in his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, 'Ephphatha,' that is, 'Be opened.' And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plain." And again in chapter viii. verses 22-25: "And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw aught. And he looked up, and said, 'I see men as trees, walking.' After that he put his hand again upon his eyes, and made him look up; and he was restored, and saw every man clearly."

In John, also, chapter ix. verses 6, 7: "When he had thus spoken, he spit on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.'...He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came seeing." In this latter case, the man was born blind.

Now, will the "jotter" of the *Napa Register* have the hardihood to say, in the face of the whole orthodox world, that Jesus "borrowed" his method of healing from Egyptian tradition, and followed the examples of the priests of the temples of the heathen deities, Isis and Serapis? We have no doubt about the matter. If Jesus of Nazareth was a real personage, and performed the acts above recorded of him, he only repeated what had been done before, during countless centuries, by all the *Magi*, or "men of wisdom," of the Egyptian and other so-called heathen temples; and other wise men who were "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," such as Moses of the Hebrews, the Chaldean astrologers, and the alchemists of Greece, knew and practiced healing arts in the same manner, long before and up to the time of Jesus of Nazareth.

Modern Spiritualists do not claim that this system of healing is new. In fact, it can be proven to have existed among all nations, civilized and savage, from time immemorial. The natives of the Sandwich Islands practice it to this day. So do the Indians of the western prairies of our own country. One of the most striking proofs of spirit control is the fact that mediums who never saw a live Indian, and know nothing about their habits, when under the control of Indian spirits, invariably resort to the method of "laying on of hands" for the curing of disease. And this takes place with those who do not profess to be healing mediums, as well as with those who do. But the "jotter" contributor to the *Napa hebdomadal* accounts for the healing by the heathen priests in this wise:

"The priests received their power from gods and goddesses such as Isis, and pretended to perform their miracles. If I read aright, they were simply men who had a fine knowledge of the healing art, such as our leading physicians now have, and custom made it necessary for them to attribute their skill to supernatural agency. But there was something so classical and beautiful about their performances, compared with the ignorant and vulgar mountebanks of the present day, that we love to dwell upon them—for they were the precursors of medical science."

Giving the credit for cures performed by "laying on of hands," "moistened with spittle" sometimes, to the medical faculty of the present day, will not, it seems to us, be considered complimentary by them. A large majority of the medical fraternity entirely repudiate this old and successful mode of treatment, and rely upon the uncertain efficacy of drugs and prepared nostrums of their own concoction as means of cure. As matter for compliment and congratulation, however, the science of medicine, in these modern days, does not deserve much notice. One of the most skillful among the faculty, and the most candid of all, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, has said that two-thirds of all their medical practice was mere conjecture. And the small proportion of cures to fatal results, in all forms of disease which come under their charge, proves the truth of the assertion.

When we shall see "men who" profess to have "a fine knowledge of the healing art, such as our leading physicians now" profess to "have," mixing their spittle with clay, and applying the mixture with their own hands to the eyes of the blind, we shall witness a precisely similar performance to that which our "jotter" attributes to those who "were the precursors of medical science." Similar, also, to that attributed to the man of Nazareth, whom all the Christian world have deified and now worship, as though he were the great God of the Universe, the First Cause of all things! A pretty pass our extremely scientific M. D.s will come to, when they are found imitating the practices of the fishermen of Galilee, and of their master, who was hung between two thieves! *Dignified* doctors! Leave them alone with their idols, Calomel and Jalap, Blue Mass and Castor Oil! How dare this obscure correspondent of a rural paper to so lower the dignity of the medical profession in the eyes of the world?

Does this "jotter" expect to abate one "jot" or tittle of the respect and awe in which the doctors are now held by the masses who take their "blue mass" without a murmur, by making odious comparisons to their discredit? Out upon such a thought or expectation! He will fail of success in such an endeavor. The people are not to be humbugged. They will stick to the doctors, and the doctors will stick to their bills to them. Kill or cure, the bills must be paid—if not by the patient, by his ex-cutors and administrators, if he have anything left to administer upon after a long sickness and fatal termination under the doctors' prescriptions.

We advise the aforesaid "jotter" to keep out of harm's way—that is, out of the reach of the members of the medical profession in this city; for if they ever "lay hands" upon him, we will not be answerable for the consequences. He may get a coat of tar and feathers. "Precursors of science of medicine," forsooth!

We shall yet have this wholesale puffer of modern quackery appealing to Dr. Bryant, or some other "ruffian mountebank," to save him from the practice of his friends by the ancient method of the Egyptian priests and of Jesus of Nazareth.

Recreations and Amusements Tabooed by the Church.

A writer in the *Christian Advocate* of last week objects to dancing, theater-going, and other amusements, as contrary to the ordinances of the Methodist Church, and therefore wicked. He remonstrates thus:

"But you may have been told, and even come to believe, that the Methodists of the last hundred years were too strict in such matters—that the rules and covenant which you solemnly promised to keep were unnecessary, and therefore are not binding. Swedenborgians and Spiritualists, Unitarians and Episcopalians, dance and go to theaters, and why may not Methodists?"

Sure enough! Why not? Our Methodistical writer replies by threatening an appeal to the Bible for an answer, in these words:

"Leaving all human authority and example out of the question, the Bible should be to us the end of all controversy; and to that infallible oracle I shall next appeal."

The idea of the Bible being the "end of all controversy" strikes us as peculiarly absurd; for it is as notorious as any fact in history, that it has ever been the beginning and foundation of all religious controversy. Whenever an appeal has been made to that book as an "infallible oracle," for the upholding of any particular doctrine, hundreds of controversialists have sprung up in an incredibly short time, confuting one passage by another, until the listening and reading world was utterly confounded by the din of the disputants, and ready to accept the statements of all or any of them as gospel truth, in order to be rid of the everlasting war of words. Religious controversy ended by an appeal to the Bible! Spirits of forgotten martyrs, whose bodies were burned at the stake, tortured upon the rack, broken on the wheel, and crushed in the iron embrace of the automaton "virgin," may answer this upstart authority, who claims that the Bible ends all controversy. Each and all of them appealed to that volume for the support of different religious views, and one obtained as much justification from its pages as another. All opinions upon matters of religious doctrine, however diverse, may be supported upon appeal to portions of the "holy" and "infallible" Scriptures. The proof of this is in the fact of the existence of so many sects, each based upon its own interpretation of various passages in the Old and New Testaments.

And in regard to the particular matter under discussion—the subject of amusements—the Bible can be quoted as strongly in their favor, and nowhere, we think, as forbidding them. Certainly, examples enough, among "God's chosen people," the record of whose history is considered so "infallible," may be found, of dancing, if not of theatrical representation, to justify the strictest sect in a more lenient view of the case than at present obtains among Bible-worshippers. Jephthah's daughter danced on the return of her father, and David danced before his maid-servants in a dress much scantier than any now in vogue upon the boards of our theaters. Miriam, the sister of Aaron, with her companions, also danced and sang and played the timbrel, in commemoration of the passage of the Red Sea. Playing upon musical instruments, and dancing to the music thereof, seems to have been common among the Israelites of old. Condemnation of the practice can nowhere be found in either the Old or New Testament. If their authority be "infallible," the examples given are ample justification for Bible-worshippers or anybody else, in dancing to their hearts' content.

Thus much for Bible prohibition of amusements. The sanctimonious and self-righteous cannot claim its authority for the total banishment of recreation from society which seems to be their aim. And when it is asserted that the character of the amusements offered to the public at the theaters is not conducive to morality, the proof does not accompany the assertion. Many instances might, indeed, be adduced, proving the excellent effect of theatrical representation in awakening and promoting the growth of the moral sentiments. The history of the drama is full of them. We can see nothing in the opposition of the Church to the theater but a jealous spirit of rivalry; the Church being the enemy of liberalism in every form. Besides, the people who are drawn toward places of amusement are absentees from the churches; and that is a sufficient cause for the jealousy of a paid priesthood.

"Norwood," Henry Ward Beecher's novel, like Oliver Wendell Holmes' "Guardian Angel," is full of inspiration and Spiritualistic sentiments; and we observe that the Christian critics are already picking flaws in the former work, as they previously did in regard to the latter. But we rather think that the authors of these interesting stories, as well as the stories themselves, will survive the most Christian criticism that can be brought to bear upon them.

THE Spiritualists of San Jose have just completed a Spiritual organization. The officers are: President, A. C. Stowe; Vice-President, R. B. Hall; Secretary, D. L. Shead; Treasurer, Mrs. A. Slocum; Trustees, J. J. Owen, W. N. Slocum, and H. A. Crawford.

Carrying Sectarianism into Politics.

The *California Christian Advocate* is not satisfied with the party nominee for the office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction. It suggests a new nomination that shall fill the measure of sectarian prejudice to the satisfaction of all who are as bigoted as the *Advocate* itself. It thinks there is yet time to nominate a new candidate, for whom the self-righteous may vote with as much willingness as if voting for themselves. And it considers this a high standard of action! Read its platform:

"Our interest in this question rises above all personal and partisan considerations. We do not want, in this office, a man of 'broad' and 'liberal,' and 'progressive' views and habits; for these technicalities in the lips of many are come to mean free-thinking and free-acting, even to trespassing upon the well defined moral and religious convictions of the people generally."

"Nor do we want one who will cater to the whims of Rome, and an effete aristocracy; but rather, one who, while he is abreast with the most intelligent of the people, is so thoroughly under the dominion of the fear and love of God, as that his own rounded and even character shall be a speaking example, safe of imitation. Shall we have such a man for this office the coming term?"

The above is evidently a fling at John Swett, the present "liberal" and "progressive" Superintendent, because he refused to make any religious distinctions in the selection of teachers for our public schools—not even heeding the objections raised by some Protestant bigot to the employment of a Roman Catholic in such capacity. It must be obvious to all true friends of our common school system, that sectarianism ought not to be permitted to get control of it in the slightest degree. Let the sectarists propagate their dogmas in their churches and Sunday schools, if they must; but keep the common schools free from dogmatic instruction and religious bigotry. Let those who are opposed to "free thinking" and "free acting" be slaves if they will; but we insist upon the free schools of the people continuing so in reality as well as in name. They are not, and ought not to be made, theological seminaries, for the dissemination of the religious opinions of whatever teachers succeed in getting appointed to teach in them. We have rid the common schools of the incubus of Bible-reading as an exercise; let us not submit to the worse burden of the dictation of sectarian teachers. Dissever the election of Superintendent of Instruction from party politics if it becomes necessary; but not on the ground that the candidate nominated by a party is too "liberal" and "progressive" to suit the fossilized bigots of theology, and so much inclined to think and act freely as to displease those who would enchain the minds of the rising generation to their dark and dismal creeds.

Insulting Championship.

The "educated" ignoramus, who is hired to write for the *Dramatic Chronicle*, continues to poke his ugly lucubrations at us, and on Tuesday last issued another batch of lies about Spiritualism and Spiritualists. He speaks of D. D. Home as performing "amazing cabinet feats"—a piece of information which will be new to Spiritualists. His misrepresentations go to show entire ignorance of the subject on the part of the writer. He bespatters a lady lecturer of this city with untempered aspersions, and volunteers as her champion against the *persuasions* of her friends! The lady in question must be highly flattered, especially in her capacity as a Spiritualist lecturer, by the championship of such a paper as the *Dramatic Chronicle*!

Constantly intermeddling in the affairs of other people, and dabbling in subjects of which he knows nothing, this impudent scribbler presumes to dictate to us in what manner we shall write upon matters that do not and cannot concern him. And in all this he exposes his own consummate ignorance of the proper sphere and occupation of a journalist, as well as his insufferable egotism and vanity. He makes a great parade of great names in capitals in his articles, as though he were acquainted with the particulars of the biography and works of each and all of them, and criticizes the latter with a familiarity born of immense self-conceit. His frequent slurs and aspersions, when referring to Spiritualism and its believers, have come to be considered of about as much consequence as the snarling and snapping of a little fice on the streets at every passer-by. Of these we should take no notice whatever, did he not couple with them personal references to the editors of this paper by name, and to the paper itself, in vulgar and vituperative style, worthy of a vulgar mind. His championship of any lady would be an insult, and would do her more damage than his censure. We assure our readers that there is not a lady lecturer in the cause of Spiritualism, who would feel flattered by anything that might be said of her in the columns of the *Dramatic Chronicle*, while the Hessian who scribbles for it continues to be employed in the dirty work. Our readers will pardon us for occupying space—which could be devoted to a more agreeable purpose—in administering this castigation to the fool's back. Its necessity is our justification.

D. D. HOME.—The late accounts from England put an entirely new face on the matter of the gift of a fortune to Mr. Home, and the suit of Mrs. Lyon, the donor, to recover it back. It seems that she thought of buying his services, as a medium, for life, and those of his little son likewise, by this apparently munificent gift. She became tyrannical over both, which conduct, of course, could not be submitted to; and the result was, she repented, and entered the suit for the recovery of her money. Having failed to secure the obedience of his child, she began to hate it, and to resolve that it should not inherit her gift to its father. She had Home arrested and cast into prison, but his friends soon bailed him out. While he was there, however, the most wonderful manifestations occurred in presence of all, and the entire company present at his release were convinced of the truth of Spiritualism. Home was made very ill by these events, and dictated his affidavit and answer to the complaint from his bed. Mrs. Lyon's lawyers go upon the ground that the law does not recognize Spiritualism, that it does not exist in equity; and therefore they bring a charge that the money was obtained by "jugglery," which the law does recognize. The result will be looked for with absorbing interest by all Spiritualists, and those who love justice and truth.

A LEFT-HANDED APOLOGY.—The San Jose *Mercury*, in making a correction in favor of a contemporary, says:

"We have no desire to misrepresent or do injustice to any one—not even the meanest of God's creatures."

Mrs. EMMA HARDING delivered her farewell address to the Spiritualists of Boston, July 10th, on the eve of her departure for England.

"Whence do We Derive Our Idea of God?"

At Mechanics' Institute Hall, on Sunday evening last, the ablest and most argumentative lecture was listened to, that has been given to the people by the lecturer since her advent to this State. The subject chosen is infinite in its scope, and the lecturer seemed to feel its broad and expansive character; for she never spoke to such advantage, and so much to the evident appreciation of her audience. Applause of the many good points was frequent; and we think a large majority of the hearers agree with us in the opinion that it was the best of all the efforts she has made in this city. She handled the recent Bible discussion, and the arguments of the participants in it, without gloves; the keen sarcasm dealt out by her, while making reference to that conclave and its objects, was most effective. We were both surprised and gratified by the manner in which the whole subject was treated. And we desire here to say, that, could we have the privilege of hearing such lectures often, not only would the cause of truth be benefited, but the repute of the lecturer would be enhanced. We certainly have had much reason to complain of the lack of inspirational force, and want of interesting subjects of discourse, in the past. But this last lecture gives promise of a better order of things, and we shall confidently expect to be still more gratified with her future efforts. The enthusiasm with which she was at first received in this city can easily be rekindled, if she will continue to exhibit the same interest in her choice of subjects, and in the cause we all have at heart, that characterized her discourse on last Sunday evening. We venture to say that no Spiritualist who heard it went away unsatisfied, and that, on the contrary, to our positive knowledge, the commendation from many of our friends was freely expressed on the occasion. Those who know us best, also know that we are not given to flattery; and what we have here written we consider only the exact truth and simple justice. It is equally certain that we have not been, and shall not be, sparing in censure, when it will subserve the cause of truth to be censorious.

Drugs to Discuss.—Brother Todd, the apostle of the "beautiful" table-tipping faith, is still perseveringly in search of a clergyman who will discuss with him. He still keeps his "challenge" in the columns of his organ, where it probably serves the useful and economical purpose of a "dead advertisement." Wonder if the voluble apostle ever read that pungent saying of Holmes—"Controversy equalizes fools and the wise—and the fools know it."—*Dramatic Chronicle.*

Is the latter clause a reason why the *Dramatic Chronicle* so perseveringly seeks a controversy with "Brother Todd," and with this paper? And is it the reason why so much controversy continually proceeds between the various sects, a termination of which is devoutly to be wished, but is now more than ever impossible? The *Chronicle* man, however, needs no controversy to prove himself a fool. That he is one, is already beyond controversy.

Two More.

A Baptist exhorter of the township of Milpitas, Santa Clara county, in this State, was indicted on the 9th of July last, by the Grand Jury, for the crime of incest with his own daughter, a half-witted child of sixteen years of age. She swears that her father has slept with her many of the time for three years past. While being conveyed to jail, he was continually talking to the officer of the merits of Christ, and what the love of God had done for his soul. While in jail, he preached to the prisoners, and was loud in prayer.

Rev. H. Wendell, a regularly ordained Southern clergyman, for many years Superintendent of the Philadelphia Orphan Asylum, has just been arrested for the rape of seven little girls who were under his charge. He confessed his guilt, but was held to bail in only \$5,000.

DANCING.—"I love these rural dances," says Longfellow, "from my heart I love them. This world at best is full of care and sorrow; the life of a poor man is so stained with the sweat of his brow, there is so much toil and struggling, and anguish and disappointment, here below, that it is with delight on a scene where all these are laid aside and forgotten, and the heart of the toil-worn peasant seems to throw off its load, and to leap to the sound of music."

Let us not then prohibit dancing, but rather teach and enable our young folks to enjoy dancing for its own worth and as a gay, healthy, pleasant, and harmless exercise and amusement. Our clergy people should not too soon conclude their dancing days are over. Old and young may enjoy it together innocently by their own firesides, away from the crush and glare and heat and confusion of the public ball-room, and thus, in its place, it will become a fruitful source of innocent gratification, and medicine to both mind and body.—*Golden Era.*

THE UNITARIANS AND UNIVERSALISTS of Brattleboro, Vt., held a meeting recently for the purpose of effecting a union, or merging the two societies into one. After remarks by several persons, a ballot was taken which resulted as follows: Among the Unitarians present, there were for union, 10—opposed to union, 38; among the Universalists present, there were for union, 25—opposed to union, 32.—*Cleveland Advocate.*

If two of the most liberal sects cannot unite on a common basis of union, how can those that differ so much with each other as the so-called evangelical churches?

ARREST OF A CHURCH SEXTON FOR REVOLTING CRIME.—Charles Woodman, sexton of Rev. Dr. Gannett's Church, on Arlington street, in New York, was arrested a short time since, for inducing little girls to enter the Church with him, where, by divers inducements, he subjected them to beastly and lecherous indignities. The indictment and aspersed facts of two of the girls, who first learned the facts, took prompt steps to arrest Woodman, who was committed to the Tombs to await an examination. Woodman was arraigned in the Municipal Court on charges of committing assault and battery on two little girls under the age of ten years, with intent to feloniously and unlawfully to carnally know and abuse. He was held to bail in \$10,000 for trial, and, in default of bail, was committed.

SCIENCE teaches us that this visible world, the sum total of chemical principles, is the result of forces that of themselves are invisible; and every specimen of organic life, be it a blade of grass or the body of a man, is but the elongation of the rocks, which are the manifestation of the forces referred to underlying them and all; and those forces have in the permutations of chemical affinity culminated in a population on this planet, or rather caskets for individuals, people, or souls to dwell in and prepare for a world to come. Who did it, and how it is done, and why it is done, is beyond the scope of my genius to answer. If anybody thinks he can, turn your back on him; he is fooling you sure. Ignorant as I am on these points, I think I know, and so does the reader, as much as anybody else.—*John Wetherbee, in Banner of Light.*

COLLEGIATE HONORS TO WOMAN EQUALLY WITH MEN.—At the annual Commencement exercises of Willamette (Oregon) University, last week, the degree of Mistress of English Literature was conferred on Louisa Simpson, Eliza A. Winton, Sarah J. Wythe, Susan Harrison, Mary L. Wythe. The degree of Master of Arts was conferred on Charles W. Parrish, Sylvester C. Simpson. The degree of Doctor of Medicine was conferred on D. M. Jones, Sublimity W. A. Cusick, of Wacunda; and J. L. Martin of Seio.

The English papers are discussing the question whether Luther was insane. His assertions that he struggled with Satan are cited as proof that he was not comatose.

COMMUNICATIONS.**SPIRITUALISM.**

NUMBER SEVEN.

Besides the omens and signs pertaining to the earth, the celestial scenery of the heavens contributed to the occult lore of inter-communication with the Gods. Watching the progress of the stars, night after night, they learned the divisions of time—years, seasons, months, weeks, and days. Holy Writ tells us that "God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years." And when the starry orbs came to be looked upon as the abodes of the deities, if not deities themselves, the Sun, naturally, became an object of paramount interest—an object of admiration. He was hailed as the "Lord of Hosts," and "Father of Lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning"—"in whom we live and move and have our being."

Next, the Moon, as Queen of Night, shedding her weird light over the land, producing fantastic shapes and fairy scenes, claimed her share of worship. And seeing that Ocean itself governed its tides by her progress, as she waxed or waned in her revolutions, could man do less than acknowledge the deity of a power which even the elements obeyed? Then came the lesser lights—Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn—who, moving in the same orbit as the Sun and Moon, were entitled to a portion of the same adoration. In the astral system of worship there existed a strange mingling of faith and reason, fact and fancy; a continued compromise between the ideal and the real—the material and the spiritual—in which the one had agreed to support the other. From it has sprung nearly every form of worship belonging to civilized humanity, and all our spiritual ideas may easily be presumed to owe their origin to astral theology. Comte says:

"Magic is a relic of polytheistic, or even fetich superstition; whereas, astrology and alchemy are merely a too bold extension of the positive spirit, before the theological spirit was got rid of. That the two classes have been confounded is owing to religious vindictiveness and is a natural consequence of the antipathy between science and theology. No doubt, medieval astrology exhibits strong traces of theological influence in its supposition that the universe was made for Man—a notion which gave way only on the discovery of the earth's motion; but, apart from that, it is evident that the doctrine rested upon the subordination of all phenomena to invariable natural laws. Its original title of judicial astrology conveyed this. No scientific analysis existed at that time which could assign to astronomical phenomena their true position in general physics; and there was therefore no principle which could restrain the ideal exaggeration attributed to celestial influences. In such a state of things, it was certainly right that human reason, resting upon the only phenomena whose laws were ascertained, should endeavor to refer to them all other phenomena, even human and social. (This was the rational scientific course; and its universality and perseverance till the seventeenth century prove its agreement with the corresponding situation. If we look at its action upon the general education of the human mind, we shall find it was most serviceable in disseminating every where a first notion of the subordination of all phenomena to invariable laws, by which rational prevision became possible."

This, coming from the author of the "Positive Philosophy," is no mean compliment to an "exploded science," which commanded the belief and respect of the wisest men from time immemorial, to a comparatively recent date. Further on, he adds:

"The successors of the astrologers and alchemists not only found science instituted by their predecessors, but the more difficult task achieved—the establishment of the principle of invariable natural laws. No influence less active and profound than theirs could have effected the popular admission of this truth; and we are reaping the fruits of it, while we forget the hands that planted. The moral influence of these great provisional conceptions was not less favorable than the intellectual; for astrology engendered a high idea of human wisdom from its power of prevision under natural laws; and alchemy roused a nobler sense of human power, before depressed by theological notions, by inspiring bold hopes from our intervention in phenomena which admitted of modification."

But medieval astrology may be said to be but the resurrection of a more ancient system, striving to burst the bands of superstition which made men slaves to an unquestioned authority—a system re-asserting its claims in the face of a libeling priesthood, who had usurped the position which the astral faith had established, the result of the experience of ages. And, besides, being jealous of the faith that had contributed to their sacerdotal power—that had originated the ideas they had claimed as their own—they, the Christian priesthood, were the unrelenting enemies and persecutors of the Magian or Sabian religion. And those old principles are still at work, in the new form of Spiritualism, to overthrow the age of faith, and establish the age of reason; or, what is better still, a rational compromise between the two.

In connecting with Spiritualism a subject, which, in the popular mind, savors so much of the Dark Ages and bygone superstitions, the following explanation may be necessary, as an apology for so doing:

It is my belief that the first ideas of spirit life originated in the idealism of astrology. In it was first conceived the idea of a spirit world, where dwelt the defunct "spirits of just men made perfect" by a life spent in the service of humanity—a life devoted to good deeds. According to Pliny, such a life entitled a man to Godhood—a God being whatever conferred benefits disinterestedly upon man. I have also noticed a remarkable agreement between the ideas of Modern Spiritualism and Ancient Astrology, which might excite suspicion that Spiritualism, as well as Christianity, has copied largely from that source without returning credit; either that, or else a common origin, or—that handiest of all explanations—a "remarkable coincidence." The Spiritualist, with Schiller, might well say,

"I never really will I blame his faith
In the magian, the more diabolical, the not merely
The human being's pride that peoples space
With life and mystical predominance,"

and pardon the mistakes and erroneous theories his ancient brother made. The aspirations which kept the ancient Spiritualist buoyant with hope, as he groped his way in the dark, led on by the

glimmering scintillation of a star, attracted from the heavens an inspiration which filled his soul with prophecies of a greater light, and a nobler life in higher spheres. By his labors he has made the task of the modern Spiritualist comparatively easy, thereby increasing knowledge and removing obstacles.

All hail, then, ye heroes of a bygone faith! The liberty we possess, the knowledge accumulated around us, and every luxury we enjoy, are your immortal voices, reminding us of our indebtedness to you. Let us hold in sacred memory the names of Socrates, Plato, Hypatia—aye, and even Julian the Apostate, Plotinus, Porphyry, and hundreds more, who have stood up in Godlike independence and said, "LET THERE BE LIGHT!" J. W. MACKIE.

SYSTEMS OF RELIGION, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

NUMBER ELEVEN.

One of the world's redeemers from theological darkness, the great archaeologist, Lesueur, says: "Fortunately, questions of ciphers have nothing in common with religion. What imports it to us, Christians, who date, so to say, from yesterday, that man should have been thrown upon our globe at an epoch more or less remote; that the world should have been created in six days, or that its birth should have consumed myriads of centuries? Can God, through it, become less grand, His work less admirable? We are, since the last eighteen hundred years, dupes to the besotted vanity of the Jews. It is time that this mystification should cease." It is fully evident that the Bible, among the Jewish and Christian nations of the earth, has been the most venerated of all books, as thousands of human beings who have sacrificed their lives in cruel suffering and final martyrdom amply testify; it has also been the highest authority in the matter of history; but it has been made the vehicle of so great a variety of chronological systems, palmed off as correct indications of time taken from the book, that, between the Hebrew and the Samaritan text and the Greek version, as also between the Old and New Testaments, the confidence formerly reposed in these Scriptures has lost its hold upon the minds of the more intelligent readers of Bible history, and they totally fail to satisfy the researcher of any well-founded reliability as to their chronological correctness in the events of human history. Even the controversies of the Church itself have resulted in nothing satisfactory to the people, inasmuch as indecision has always left the Church just where controversy began, producing no conviction and no standard by which to judge of the duration of the Egyptian nation, or anything definite regarding its historic existence, or the ancient exaltation of its majesty and architectural glory in arts, some of which we, even in our day and generation, have not yet surpassed. It is therefore not for lack of quantity, but quality, in the Biblical chronology, that imposes upon the whole subject such grave difficulties in the estimation of the honest and erudite seeker after truthful knowledge. The Church has never as yet seen proper to pronounce sentence upon any of these numerous systems of the Scripture chronology, though it must have foreseen that but one of them could be possibly be true. Was the declared infallibility of the Church at fault in this matter, after so many and solemn declarations on other points, many of them of far less importance? Or did she understand how the question stood with regard to her own Church history, in relation to the origin of the ritualism and dogmatical teachings, and their close and irrefutable connection with the religious systems of Egypt? The celebrated author, Lepsius, says: "The Jewish chronology differs in a most remarkable manner from every other; and even in times as modern as those of the Persian kings, the difference amounts to no less than 160 years, from known dates. Its several sources present but little difference among themselves. They count according to years of the world, a calculation which, as also Ilder considers most probable, was invented, together with the whole present chronology of the Jews, by the Rabbi Hillel Hanassi, in the year 344 after Christ, and thenceforward gradually adopted. They fix the creation of the world 3761 B. C.; and all agree, even Josephus, in the usual calculation of the Hebrew text. They fix the Deluge at 1656; the birth of Abraham at 1948; Isaac's, 2048; Jacob's, 2108; Joseph's, 2193; Jacob's arrival in Egypt, 2293; Joseph's death, 2300 years after Adam. The question is now, how must we explain this obvious dislocation of facts as compared with the true dates? Ilder has demonstrated that the introduction of the era of the world, and consequently of the whole system of chronology, must be ascribed to the author of the *Metals*, (or New Moons), and in general of the whole later Jewish calendar, the Rabbi Hillel Hanassi, who flourished in the first half of the fourth century." A proper sense of ordinary justice impels the statement, that Moses, who lived about the fourteenth century before Christ, is in no way connected with or concerned in the innumerable additions attached to books which bear his venerable name, eighteen hundred years after his death and burial, by a modern Rabbi. The scientists have been unanimous in rejecting any system of Biblical computation which was found to conflict with the existing state of knowledge, and thus pass over in silence the rabbinical ciphers, to which men like the President of Amherst College vainly endeavor to reconcile the trade cosmology of the fathers; how, however, are the terrestrial discoveries of married illiterates like Currier, De la Beche, Murchison, Owen, Lyell, and Agassiz. But Calvinism, as we read it in the pages of President Hitchcock, assumes a somewhat more amiable appearance than that practiced by the murderer of Servetus, or the rank iconoclast, John Knox, if we can judge by the subjoined admissions: "If these positions be correct, it follows that, as we ought not to expect the doctrines of religion in treatises on science, so it is unreasonable to look for the principles of philosophy in the Bible. But a still larger number of (clerical) authors, although men of talents, and familiar, it may be, with the Bible and theology, have no accurate knowledge of geology. The results have been, first, that by resorting to denunciation and charges of infidelity, to answer arguments from geology which they did not understand, they have excited unreasonable prejudice and alarm among common Christians respecting that science and its cultivators; secondly, they have awakened disgust, and even contempt, among scientific men, especially those of skeptical tendencies (!), who have inferred that a cause which resorts to such defenses must be very weak. They have felt very much as a good Greek scholar would, who should read a severe critique upon the style of Isocrates or Demosthenes, and, before he had finished the review, should discover internal evidence that the writer had never learned the Greek alphabet." J. D. PIERSON.

The Spiritualists of Vermont held their Convention at Stowe, June 7th, 8th, and 9th, 1867. Addresses were made by Mrs. M. A. Townsend, Mr. Tarbell, Mrs. A. P. Brown, Mrs. Tanner, and others.

WITCHCRAFT AND MEDIUMSHIP.—A. B. Whiting, a lecturer in Buffalo, New York, spoke on this subject lately, and to the following effect:

"He traced the progress of Spiritualism back to the earliest date of history, showing that the belief of spirit-communication had existed and been practiced, in some form or other, among all the tribes and races known to history. He alluded to the visit of Saul to the Witch of Endor, saying that Saul visited her by night, in disguise, to obtain information, just as a great many people go to see mediums now, who would be ashamed to let others know. There was nothing wicked in her communication, and after Saul had obtained the information, she prepared a feast, thereby displaying the principles of Christianity long before they had been unfolded by Jesus. "If the modern mediums were compared to nothing worse than the woman of Endor, they would have no reason to complain. He spoke of the witchcraft of Old and New England, instancing Martha Currier and the Rev. Mr. Burroughs as persons of exceeding good moral character who had suffered death because of their extraordinary power as mediums; and if the mediums of to-day had lived in the times of Cotton Mather, they would have suffered the same fate."

The wisest man, who speaks in ignorance, speaks for himself, and to the ears of those who perceive his ignorance. The great majority of men of science appear in this light to Spiritualists when they argue against Spiritualism. Men who were nominally know nothings have proved a formidable party in politics; unfortunately, Spiritualism has, in its most active opponents, real know nothings, who will not admit any fact of Spirit origin, unless such as they have been educated to believe. In that case, many have powers of deglutition rivaling those of the anaconda in the physical way.—*Professor Hare.*

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